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ABSTRACT

The role played by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation in promoting public interest in physical education is described. Particular emphasis is placed upon the Association's activities in information and publicity, professional preparation and teacher certification standards, physical fitness, and state and federal physical education legislation. (JD)

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THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION: PROFESSIONALS PROUDLY PROMOTING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION: PROFESSIONALS PROUDLY PROMOTING PHYSICAL EDUCATION*

Some ten months ago, I received an invitation from your astute and charming chairperson to investigate the positive contributions of AAHPER and present them to the History Academy at this meeting. The invitation also indicated that someone else would discuss the negative influences. I scratched my head a half-dozen times which stimulated several thoughts. While I was indeed flattered by the invitation, I wondered why I was asked to speak on the positive aspects of AAHPER, for I knew little about the organization. Though I had never praised or condemned the Alliance publicly, I had a number of negative feelings about it, no doubt inculcated during my years as a graduate student at Penn State. I thought how easy it might be to criticize the Alliance for its glaring sins of omission as well as for its recorded offenses. Pursuing this course would present little difficulty, particularly since I already had a number of preconceived bias floating in my gray matter.

I then wondered who in God's creation was given this easy assignment of discussing the negative impact of AAHPER. When I learned it was one of my mentors who so dutifully helped to mold so many of my negative feelings about AAHPER, I was ready to punt. Ron Smith not only has an ample supply of ammunition to support his views of AAHPER, but he happens to be endowed with one of the best analytical minds in the field of sport history. He is a seasoned tactician who never seems to

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*The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER) was formerly The American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER), The American Physical Education Association (APEA), and The American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education (AAAPE).

to lose arguments. If I were going to accept this assignment, I needed help! I thought of praying immediately to Bruce Bennett, Earle Zeigler, and Marvin Eyler. But alas, I scratched my head for the seventh time. This action miraculously brought to the surface a very obvious revelation. Given my disposition about AAHPER, would it not be a tremendous challenge to find some good things to say about the Alliance? And would it not be even a greater challenge to discuss this topic with my mentor in a public forum? Answering both questions affirmatively, I launched into this project attempting to build a case for the positive contributions of AAHPER. You will have to judge whether or not I have succeeded.

If one looks at what AAHPER has done for the discipline of physical education and for the profession of physical education, clearly one finds its greatest contributions have been to the profession. Logically, then, I have aimed my paper in that direction. In the brief time alloted for this presentation, I could barely update Mabel Lee and Bruce Bennett's commemorative history of AAHPER written in 1960, let alone analyze its contributions since 1885. Considering the time element, I decided to focus on one major area in which AAHPER has made significant contributions to the profession from its inception, namely the promotion of physical education. From my investigation of AAHPER's involvement in this area, I have identified four aspects of effective promotion--public information and publicity, professional preparation and teacher certification standards, physical fitness, and state and federal physical education legislation. This paper, in examining AAHPER's specific role in each of those four areas, demonstrates the work of professionals proudly promoting physical education.

AAHPER has been a great facilitator of state physical education laws. Between World War I and 1930, twenty-five states enacted legislation requiring physical education in the public schools, while eleven states strengthened existing laws on required physical education. The Alliance, known then as the American Physical Education Association (APEA), influenced the adoption of these laws by its strong, public opposition to the militarists plea for compulsory military training in the public schools. In place of the military training, APEA called for daily physical education in the schools mandated by law.

As the issue of compulsory military training moved into the public spotlight during World War I, military enthusiasts and social critics eagerly supported it. APEA, however, stood its ground vigorously opposing it. The Association believed that military drill in the schools would be more detrimental than beneficial because the artificial and monotonous drill routines combined with the heavy weapons that most boys could not handle would "produce an aversion for military training." Instead, APEA recommended "a rational system of physical training, consisting of exercises and games adapted to the age, sex, and capacity of the growing boy and girl."[1] Emphasizing its preference for state legislation over military drill, the Association promulgated the following resolution adopted in April, 1916, at its annual convention:

> That instead of advocating military drill in the public schools, we urge the adoption of state laws requiring a broad and flexible schedule of physical training demanding as a minimum, five periods a week (i.e., one period daily) in the elementary grades and three periods per week in high and secondary schools. In the past, public school officials have not allowed sufficient time to demonstrate the beneficial results of proper physical training.[2]

The APEA's position on physical education was further solidified in December, 1916, when the APEA National Council acted on two proposals

offered by Dudley A. Sargent. One proposal directed the Council to appoint a National Legislative Committee. This body's chief purpose was to scrutinize all proposed national, state, and local legislation dealing with physical training. Then, it would offer recommendations on the basis of APEA's position concerning this issue. The second proposal called for the formation of special legislative committees in each state composed of APEA members. These committees would serve as perpetrators of state and local physical education legislation. Council elected Sargent, George W. Ebler, William H. Burdick, and James H. McCurdy to the National Committee.[3]

Perhaps the need for state physical education laws and the involvement of APEA has been captured best in a 1917 editorial written by APEA president William H. Burdick. He stated that the War has pointed out what the profession has said for years regarding the physical ineptness of America's youth. The immediate reaction was pressure to establish military training programs in the public schools. Burdick not only chided the profession for contributing to this state of affairs, but he also beckoned physical educators to correct this situation when he wrote:

> The Profession has been a fault in not inspiring a joy in physical training in the hearts of its pupils. Now that we have our opportunity, there should be aggressive work done. Not four [New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and California recently passed state laws], but forty-eight legislatures should make physical education mandatory for public school systems.[4]

Interest in state physical education legislation extended beyond the boundaries of APEA. One of the Association's central figures, Dudley A. Sargent, was at least partially responsible for this phenomenon. In February, 1917, John Dewey, Sargent and six other leading educators formed the Committee for Promoting Physical Education in the Public

Schools of the United States. Responding to President Woodrow Wilson's statement that "physical training is needed, but can be had without compulsory military service," these prominent educators organized themselves. Dewey chaired this august body whose aim was to convince all states to adopt physical education legislation patterned after Dr. Sargent's model state bill adopted by Massachusetts. His bill provided for physical training in public schools without the military features. In an effort to reach its objective, the committee issued the following statement:

> We believe that the time has come when the public schools can and should, enter deliberately and purposefully upon a definite plan for the preparation of our youth physically for the exigencies of life and for all the demands of citizenship. We need to spend more money and more time upon physical training intended to develop the body so that both boys and girls may be prepared equally for the pursuits of peace or the vicissitudes of war.[5]

In recent years the Alliance has been equally influential in the federal legislative arena. The clearest example is the the work of the Alliance in having physical education included in Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1977. Julian Stein and several AAHPER officers testified before Congressional committees. Their testimony was instrumental in bringing physical education under the umbrella of this act. In addition to the effort the Alliance has exerted in this area, the assistance of two friends of physical education, Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Senator Ted Kennedy, proved to be invaluable. Their influence on Capitol Hill combined with their knowledge of legislative politicking facilitated the passage of this bill.[6] For physical educators, this law means additional experiences in designing, developing, and conducting programs which bring handicapped children into the mainstream of education. The bottom line, thus, is additional opportunities for employment.

As with federal and state legislation, AAHPER's track record with physical fitness has been equally impressive. As early as 1943, AAHPER issued a statement on "The Role of Exercise in Physical Fitness." It emerged from the National War Fitness Conference held that year. Basically, the statement contended that physical fitness was one aspect of total fitness. But physical fitness was a necessary component because it served as an antidote to sedentary living created by modern, labor-saving devices.[7] Two years later AAHPER and the Educational Policies Commission issued a joint statement on health and physical fitness. Urging the schools to do more for health and fitness, this statement recommended a physical examination, follow-up of exam, instruction in physical and mental health, diet, and "opportunities for play and exercise which will provide needed needed physical activity and develop good muscular coordination."[8] In 1950 AAHPER and its sister organization, the Society of State Directors of HPER, adopted a platform for physical education. This platform re-affirmed the Association's fitness statements of 1943 and 1945.

The 1943 statement was released ten years before the Kraus-Weber findings ignited the fitness explosion in America. AAHPER was well aware of the physical fitness needs of American youth. The Association had recognized this need very early in its history; for whatever reason, though, no one paid attention. Like prophets sitting on the city wall telling everyone the Whirlwind is coming, the Association warned of the lack of fitness, but no one bothered to listen.

Once the Kraus-Weber findings brought national attention to the physical condition of America's youth, AAHPER responded to this question magnificently. It summoned more than 100 of its leading members to a Washington conference in September, 1956, to give the profession advice and

direction on the issue of physical fitness. Although this meeting was overshadowed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower's fitness conference, held the previous June, and by the establishment of the President's Council on Youth Fitness, it, nevertheless, laid the groundwork for the Association's program of physical fitness.[10]

What emerged from this conference was AAHPER's Youth Fitness Project in 1957 and eventually AAHPER's program of Operation Fitness in 1959. Following the Washington meeting, AAHPER appointed a Research Council composed of such notable physical educators as Ruth Abernathy, Karl and Carolyn Bookwalter, Anna Espenschade, Majorie Phillips, David Brace, Thomas Cureton, and Paul Hunsicker among others. This group met in February, 1957, at Chicago where it conceived and launched the AAHPER Youth Fitness Project. It devised a test battery which eventually became the AAHPER Youth Fitness Test. The Council also named Paul Hunsicker to direct the project and charged him with assessing the physical fitness of American children by having this test administered to a representative sample of American youth in grades 5 through 12. Hunsicker conducted this survey during the 1957-58 school year, securing data on 8500 boys and girls. From these data, he established national norms for the AAHPER test.[11] The completion of this project was a significant achievement for AAHPER. Not only did it demonstrate the effectiveness of the Association's leadership to carry-out a well-conceived and well-organized plan of action, but it also enabled physical educators around the country to compare their pupils' fitness levels with national standards.

AAHPER's efforts in this project led in 1959 to a master physical fitness program--Operation Fitness. Its purpose was to promote and initiate fitness programs of an expanded nature. The Association sponsored

clinics and workshops throughout the country emphasizing camping and related outdoor activities in addition to physical fitness testing. AAHPER produced and made available to the public physical fitness testing kits consisting of a test manual, personal performance records, and emblems and certificates for rewarding those who achieved certain standards. The Association also made films and other other teaching aids available to those who planned to initiate and conduct fitness programs. In order to publicize the physical fitness movement, AAHPER distributed brochures, banners, and slogans, and it barraged the media with a massive advertising campaign. Through Operation Fitness, the Association awarded special grants to various research centers to carry out research on physical fitness. Operation Fitness also received a number of grants from corporations.

While AAHPER devoted much attention to the establishment and promotion of physical fitness standards during the 1950s, it has always been concerned with professional standards regarding teacher preparation and certification. As early as 1890, Luther H. Gulick proposed that the Association appoint a committee to devise standards for teacher preparation. The Association appointed committees in 1899, 1913, and 1920 to investigate the curricula and standards of teacher preparation institutions. In 1925 APEA in conjunction with the Bureau of Education sponsored a joint conference on teacher training from which emerged a national study on physical education preparation.[13] AAHPER organized a National Committee for Certification of Teachers, Supervisors, and Directors of Physical Education. James H. McCurdy, Carl L. Schrader, Frederick Rand Rogers, and A. G. Ireland served on this committee which surveyed state certification requirements throughout the country. Finding certification standards for physical education inadequate in some states

and non-existent in others, this committee made strong recommendations to the states to correct this situation. It believed that tougher standards for certification would give physical education equal recognition with the other subjects.[14]

AAHPER again directed attention toward standards of professional preparation in the years following World War II because the number of teacher preparation institutes increased dramatically. The Association, with the help of an Athletic Institute grant, sponsored a conference on undergraduate preparation in 1948 and one on graduate programs in 1950. Both conferences produced reports containing guidelines and standards for their respective courses of study.[15]

AAHPER and its forebearers have strived continuously to keep physical education in the forefront of the public's eye. In fact our organization's greatest accomplishments have occurred as a result of its promotional and public information work. We have already witnesses the effectiveness of the Association's promotional campaigns in regard to state physical education legislation, the physical fitness movement, and in establishing or improving program standards and certification. What remains for discussion are two other successful promotional ventures in which AAHPER has kept physical education in the public spotlight.

The first of these occurred in 1932 when Jesse Feiring Williams, president of AAHPER, chaired the National Committee on Physical Education. It consisted of twenty-seven prominent educators and citizens. Jame Addams of Hull House, E. H. Carey, president of the American Medical Association, William F. Russell, Dean of Teachers College, Columbia, and the presidents of nine colleges and universities were among those serving on the committee. During this time of crisis and tight money when many

educational programs were in jeopardy, the committee called upon the public to support physical education. It urged Americans to stand behind physical education, for it was just as essential during those economically troubled times as it was during times of prosperity.[16]

Four decades later, AAHPER launched the largest promotional and public information project in its history. The Physical Education Public Information Project (PEPI) took shape in 1970. It grew out of a meeting sponsored by AAHPER and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. The leadership of those two organizations were troubled by the distorted image of physical education, attributed in part to its association with athletics. Physical education has often borne the brunt of jock jokes. In order to discuss the plight of modern physical education and to suggest ways of improving its public image, the leaders of AAHPER and the President's Council invited to Washington thirteen prominent individuals interested in physical education. The group decided to package physical education and sell it to the public. PEPI's mission was to "convince the public that they need [sic] to follow a lifetime of physical activity." It emphasized beginning physical education programs early in life at the elementary school level and continuing them throughout adulthood in the form of lifetime activities.[17]

Since 1971 PEPI has conducted nemerous promotional projects. Its annual projects include National Physical Education and Sports Week (March 1-7) and the National Poster Contest. It publishes a public relations column in JOPER, and it suggested various fund raising programs to schools, such as the Jump Rope-A-Thon. Special events of this nature are designed to attract the attention of the news media which, in turn, publicizes physical education. PEPI's latest public relations endeavor

was the spot commercials during 1978 NFL games promoting physical education.[18]

Over the years AAHPER has been involved in a number of special projects, such as the Outdoor Education Project, the Lifetime Sports Project, and most recently, the AAHPER Aging Project. The organization moves in these directions in an attempt to service the changing needs and demands of society. As a member of the AAHPER Aging Committee, I have been involved in the Alliance's work in that direction. I am keenly aware of AAHPER public information officer Elinore Darland's diligent work in securing from the Administration on Aging a $185,000 grant so that AAHPER could provide leadership and develop health, exercise, and recreational programs for America's older adults.

Throughout its history, AAHPER and its forerunners have served the profession of physical education well. Its greatest achievements have been the promotion of physical education and public information which includes the influencing of state legislation, the involvement in the physical fitness movement, and the upgrading of academic standards for teacher preparation and certification. AAHPER had made numerous other contributions to the profession which could have been discussed, but I have selected what I believed to be the most important. However, it would be a disservice to the Alliance not to mention some of them. I am referring to AAHPER's involvement in setting standards in athletics for children; its publications and book services; its position papers on various facets of health, physical education and recreation; its production of films and film strips; and its bibliographic services such as its Information Research Utilization Service (IRUC), a storehouse of bibliographical materials dealing with atypical children.

From the standpoint of promotion and public information, AAHPER has been a positive contributor to physical education. It is a story of professionals proudly promoting our profession. In my estimation, AAHPER is a worthy organization. If I may, I would like to borrow Ernst H. Arnold's quotation of a German poet in order to depict the worthiness of our professional organization. Arnold wrote:

> Was ist, is werth, dass es besteht und werth auch, dass es untergeht. [What is, is worthy to exist and worthy also to perish.][19]

Are you willing to accept the challenge to support, improve, and preserve the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, or will you let it die?

NOTES

1. "Military Drill in Public Schools," American Physical Education Re-Review, 21 (October 1916): 430.

2. Ibid., p. 431.

3. "Annual Meeting of the National Council of American Physical Education Association, 30 December 1916, New York City," American Physical Education Review, 22 (January 1917): 34.

4. William H. Burdick, "Editorial," American Physical Education Review, 22 (November 1917): 500.

5. "Leading Educators Press for Physical Training in the Public Schools," American Physical Education Review," 22 (February 1917): 113.

6. Interview with Julian Stein, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Washington, D.C., 26 January 1979.

7. American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, The Role of Exercise in Physical Fitness, An Official Statement of the National War Fitness Conference, 1943 (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, 1943), 7 pp.

8. Educational Policies Commission and the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Health and Physical Fitness for for All American Children and Youth (Washington, D.C.: Educational Policies Commission and American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1945), p. 3.

9. W. K. Streit and Simon A. McNeely, "A Platform for Physical Education," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 21 (March 1950): 136-37.

10. "The AAHPER Conference on Fitness," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 27 (November 1956): 10-11.

11. Paul A. Hunsicker, "AAHPER's Youth Fitness Project," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 28 (November 1957): 17; American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, AAHPER Youth Fitness Test Manual (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1958). i, 1.

12. "Operation Fitness, U.S.A." Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 30 (January 1959): 25-27.

13. Mabel Lee and Bruce L. Bennett, "This is Our Heritage," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 31 (April 1960): 31, 44, 45, 53, 57.

14. A.G. Ireland, et al., "Uniform Certification Urged Upon States," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1 (September 1930), 19-20.

15. Lee and Bennett, "Our Heritage," p. 76.

16. National Committee on Physical Education," Physical Education Today," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 4 (March 1933): 4.

17. Tom York, "Who Buys Physical Education?" speech delivered to the National Convention of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Detroit, Michigan, 3 April 1971.

18. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education, NASPE News, January, 1979, p. 7.

19. E. H. Arnold, "Preparedness--Presidential Address," American Physical Education Review, 21 (June 1916): 352.